

AmeriCorps National

The 57 Teach For America AmeriCorps members at the Pine Ridge, Rosebud, and Standing Rock Reservations serve as full-time classroom teachers across all grade levels and content areas. The members are an important source of talent for their schools. They set ambitious goals, build strong relationships with students and families, and practice culturally-responsive teaching methods. As a result, students in our AmeriCorps members' classrooms outpace expected academic gains by 0.23 grade levels, on average. Because the students are the future leaders of their tribes, the Teach For America AmeriCorps members also focus on student leadership development, helping students develop the critical consciousness they need to succeed on their path to and through college. Teach For America AmeriCorps members teach in geographic regions and content areas that are designated as critical shortage areas by the United States Department of Education.

In just the first months of their service term, AmeriCorps members serving with the Red Cross of South Dakota have completed seven home fire preparedness campaigns and installed 733 smoke alarms in homes around the state. They have brought fire preparedness education to more than 300 homes. Through the Pillowcase Project, AmeriCorps members have taught schoolchildren important lessons about being prepared for emergencies. The project teaches children in grade 3 through 5 to learn, practice, and share how to stay safe in an emergency and gives them a personalized pillowcase with suggested items to include in case of an emergency.

AmeriCorps VISTA

Black Hills Special Services Cooperative in South Dakota's mission is to build stronger communities by helping individuals and organizations reach their full potential through support across an array of programs that address unmet needs of individuals, schools, agencies and communities. The AmeriCorps VISTA project partners with other nonprofit agencies throughout South Dakota to meet the needs of youth and help individuals reach their highest potential through the creation of a donor cultivation process, development of a volunteer recruitment and management system, and community outreach materials.

AmeriCorps NCCC

The vision of Black Hills Works is of a community where all people are good neighbors, valued friends, productive workers, respected leaders, and caring volunteers. The organization provides services to more than 600 people with a variety of disabilities and aims to create a community where everyone participates to achieve a life of full potential. An AmeriCorps NCCC team supported Black Hills Works with their mission during the spring of 2015. Members served as support personnel in the gym, kitchen, elderly room, sensory room, learning center, and arts center, where they served nearly two hundred individuals with disabilities. The members taught classes on musical appreciation, arts and crafts, guitar, how to shoot a basketball, dance, and even Zumba. The team also helped to create more projects for the people both from Black Hills Works and the Rapid City community who use the Suzie Cappa Arts Center by going to their downtown location one day a week to prepare materials for future projects. This allowed the staff to focus on working with the individuals served.

Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota (LSS-SD) is a statewide human service agency with a mission to care for, support, and strengthen individuals, families, and communities. In June of 2014, heavy rainfall caused large-scale flooding in areas of eastern South Dakota, submerging at least ten area farms and impacting an estimated 1,100 homes in Canton alone. An AmeriCorps NCCC team assisted LSS-SD with response efforts, removing 5,000 pounds of wood, insulation, wood paneling, and dry wall debris from homes, moving furniture into newly cleaned basements, removing carpet, floor tacks, and staples from floors and stairs, and scrubbing mold. Removing flood affected materials from the houses prepared the buildings to be power-washed and sanitized, reducing the amount of health issues in the community caused by mold spores. The team also assisted in administrative work, organizing contact information for 533 volunteers, organizations, and homeowners, creating agendas and sign-in sheets for meetings, making phone calls to 348 homeowners in need of assistance, and putting together a video on the flood and disaster relief efforts in the affected areas.